

Minimal Space; Minimal Equipment

[Dr. Scott Klungseth](#), Project Director

Watchdogs and Wellness

Beresford PRCE

Beresford, South Dakota

Scott.klungseth@k12.sd.us

Minimal Space; Minimal Equipment

Fine Motor Skills

I use these fine motor skills as stations, they also work for students that are “not allowed” to participate.

Clothes Pin Clip:

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Equipment: mini clothes pins (or standard size) 25+ and container

Directions: Students take one clothes pin at a time and attempt to clip to the container (I use a rubber made container that I keep the clothes pins in, to clip them to.)

First, use thumb and pointer finger, then thumb and middle finger, thumb and ring-finger, thumb and pinky finger.

Variation: Use your non-dominant hand

String Beads

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Beads/Buttons of all sizes and string

Directions: Students take one bead/button at a time and thread them onto the string

Tweezers Pick Up

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Equipment: Tweezers per student, small bead, buttons, paper (anything small enough to pick up with a tweezers) and a container

Directions: Students take a tweezers and use thumb and pointer finger to pick up small objects and place them in a container.

Variation: Use each combination of finger(s) and thumb; Use non-dominant hand; Use Tongs instead of tweezers

Markers

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Marker per student and marker board

Directions: Student will draw Figure 8's with right and left hand

Variations: Draw different shapes or letters: rainbows, "s", and tornadoes

Dice Stack w/ pencil erasers

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Several Dice per student (6+), pencil top erasers

1, 2, 3 or even/odd, letters on dice, spell words, scrabble tiles

Directions:

Student will hold pencil top erasers and use them to pick up dice.

Dice can be stacked a variety of ways, numerical order, evens, and odds

Variations: Use dice with letters (or scrabble tiles) to spell out spelling words; Use dice to 'write' math problems

Nuts and Bolts

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Equipment: Several nuts and bolts sets

Directions: Student will find partner sets of nuts and bolts and twist them together

Variations: Time them, in X time, how many sets can you make? Twist them on using different thumb and finger combinations

Crayon Drop

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Several Crayons per student

Directions: Student will hold a handful of crayons (4-7 depending on hand size)

A partner will then tell them which color to drop from their hand.

The student holding the colors will need to manipulate the crayons with only the one hand, so that only the color asked for is dropped.

Variation: Use poker size chips of different colors or buttons

Plate Alphabet

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Paper plates with the Alphabet written on it and a set of magnets per student

Directions: Students pick a plate then place the magnets, one on top, and one on bottom

They will use the bottom magnet to move the top magnet so that it traces the letter of the alphabet on top

Variation: Have shapes or number on the plate

Tennis Ball

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Tennis ball with a slit cut into it per student and beans or beads

Directions: Student will fill tennis ball with beads/beans until it is full and make it puke...

Dowel Races

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Wooden dowel per pair of students

Directions: Student take turns putting thumb and pointer finger on the dowel, each person putting theirs higher than the other persons, until they reach the top

Variation: Use each combination of thumb and finger(s)

Juggling Skills and Cues

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Standard Three: Students will develop responsible and respectful personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

Equipment: Scarves or Plastic bags

Directions:

Holding Scarf: Grab the middle of the scarf with thumb, index and middle finger (Jelly Fish)

Throw and Catch: Hold scarf (Jelly Fish), lift arm as high as you can reach and just before you reach your highest point, gently flick your wrist and release the scarf into the air. Let the scarf float down and catch it at waist level. Use right and left hand/same hand throw and catch/alternate hands. Cues: Lift and Catch

One Scarf Throw and Catch: Hold scarf (Jelly Fish) in one hand, bring your arm across your body and release it at the highest point, flick your wrist. Let the scarf float down and catch it with opposite hand. Repeat. Cues: Lift and Catch

Two Scarf Throw and Catch: Hold the scarves (jelly fish), one in each hand. Lift your right hand across your body and release the scarf on the left side of your body. Lift your Left arm across your body and release the scarf on your right side. Your arms have made an X pattern. Catch the scarves at waist level. First catch with left hand then right hand. Cues: Right Hand-Left Hand- Catch -Catch. Repeat.

HOLDING Three Scarves: Make a Jelly Fish with the First scarf. Place it in your hand and wrap your little finger and ring finger around the scarf. Do not stick the scarf in between fingers. Grab the second scarf, in Jelly fish position, with thumb, index and middle fingers of the same hand. Grab the Third scarf (jelly fish) with your other hand. Place it between thumb and middle finger.

Three scarves, One Throw: Hold the scarves in jelly fish position. Lift and release the scarf that is held by the thumb, index and middle finger in the hand that has two scarves. Lift and release it on the opposite side. Let it drop the ground

Three scarves, Two Throws: Hold the scarves in Jelly fish position, lift and release the #1 scarf (front scarf). Then, lift the scarf from the other hand, #2 and release it on the other side of the

body. Remember to reach under the first throw when reaching across. Let both scarves fall to the ground. The scarves should land on the opposite sides of the body. Cues: Right and Left or One and Two (or colors of scarves).

Three Scarves, Three Throws: Hold the scarves in Jelly fish position. Lift and release the front scarf from the hand which has 2 scarves in it, #1. Then, lift the scarf from the opposite hand, #2 and release it on the opposite side. Lift and release the remaining scarf on the same side as the first scarf, #3. Let all 3 fall to the ground. Cues: Right and Left or One and Two

Three Scarves, Three Throws, Three Catches: Lift and release One, lift and release 2, Catch One, lift and release 3, Catch Two, Catch 3. Cues: Right-Left-Right, Lift-Lift-Catch-Lift-Catch

By Self: Lift and Catch are great Cue words. Then Partner Juggling, Lift and Switch are the words I use with 2 and a partner; with a partner and 4 scarves we say: Lift, Switch and Catch

Additional Games:

Jacks: Bounce ball, take 1 jack, bounce ball and take 2, etc.

Operation

Let's Go Fishin'

Barrel of Monkeys

Cootie

Jenga

Ants in the Pants

Walk Tag

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Standard Four: Students will understand that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, social interaction, and employment.

Equipment: none

Directions: Divide student into pairs. Students identify who will start as leader. On "go" leader begins walking throughout the activity area with follower trailing. Encourage follower to remain 'as close as possible, without tagging". On the "stop" signal, both players stop in place. The leader must remain frozen – no movement to avoid being tagged. The follower must keep feet in place, but can lean and stretch forward to attempt to tag the leader. If the leader is tagged, students change roles. If the leader is not tagged, keep the same role for the next round. If the leader is the same for two consecutive times, have them change roles.

Robot Master

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Blind Fold per pair

Directions: Divide class into groups of 3. Each group picks a robot master; the other two students are robots. Robots can only walk in one direction. Once a robot comes to a barrier or another robot they must stop and call out the master's name. The only other thing a robot can say is "BEEP". The master's job is to keep all of the robots moving around the room. When one gets stuck, the master turns the robot in new directions. Switch masters and repeat.

Man-Monkey-Camera

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Standard Four: Students will develop responsible and respectful personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

Standard Five: students will understand that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, social interaction, and employment.

Equipment: None

Directions: This is a variation on Rock-Paper-Scissors. Students stand and hop 3 times as they say "Man-Monkey-Camera". On the word "Camera" the student chooses their 'symbol' as the following:

"Man" is made by standing with hands at your sides (beats Camera)

"Monkey" is made with hands held high above your head (beats Man)

"Camera" is made with hands at your face; as if to take a picture (beats Monkey)

Divide playing area into 3 zones, then once the students are sure of the symbols, have them all start in zone 3 and they may play anyone in that zone. If you win in zone 3, move to zone 2. If you do not win, stay in 3 and play someone else. Once in zone 2, continue to play, if you win, move to zone 1. If you do not win in zone 2, drop back down to zone 3. If you win in zone 1 stay there and continue to play competitors as they enter your zone. After a few minutes, stop them and give them a breather, they will need it!

Speedy Shapes

(Grades K-2)

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms.

Equipment: Music, Cards with shapes (or letters, numbers) Shape/letter/number can be also drawn on a marker board, if you don't have cards.

Directions: Assign each student a partner, when music plays, have students move (can use locomotor skills) around the general space. When music stops, find their partner and make the shape/letter/number with the partner that is shown on the card the teacher is holding.

Hoops and Bean Bags

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Equipment: Enough Hoops for each student and Bean Bags so that every set of partners has one bean bag, Music

Directions: Hoops are 2-3 feet apart in a double row. Have the students stand in a hoop.

One person starts off with the bean bag, when the music plays they try and toss it into their partner's hoop. The partner tries to block/catch the bag without letting it land on/in the hoop. Then, they throw the bag back at the partner's hoop. If the bag slides out of the hoop, it is not a point. It must stay on or in to count as a point. If it is too close to tell, rock-paper-scissors or re-do. Remind kids if they throw too hard, it won't stay in the hoop.

Rules 1: feet cannot be together in the front of the hoop, can be any way/place else in or/on the hoop; feet must stay on the floor (no kicking) Rule 2: Knees cannot touch the ground Rule 3: Your behind can't be lower than your knees

We play for about 1 min. turn off music and then give the bean bags to one side, and I have the other side switch partners (the move one person to their left, last person moves to the other end of the line). Switching partners often allows everyone a chance to have a little success and I find it stops arguing.

Toe Tag

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Equipment: Bean bag per student

Directions: Each student has a bean bag, and throws their bean bag at everyone else's toes! They can have a point each time they hit some ones toes! I count any part of the shoe as a "toe". But remember, watch out! Everyone else is aiming at your toes, so keep moving! I switch often, everyone against everyone, one color of bean bag against another, boy against

girls, Nike against Adidas, etc! The more you switch, the more they will love it! Plus, they will need a break! This game is a work out!

Tanks and Commanders

(Grades K-2)

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Equipment: Small soft balls and blindfold for each team

Directions: Each student will have a partner, one will be tank and the other will be the commander. The tank puts on the blind fold. The commander gives verbal directions to the tank so that the tank can find the soft balls scattered around the playing area When a tank is loaded (finds a ball) it must toss it to destroy another tank. A tank that is hit reverses roles with its commander. Commanders can protect their tanks from being hit by knocking down the incoming balls, but can never touch their tanks. Switch rolls often.

Rise and Shine

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard Four: Students will develop responsible and respectful personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

Equipment: ball per pair

Directions: Partners hold a ball between their heads (no hands). They go down to the ground, laying down flat. Once down, they must stand back up without letting the ball drop, or using their hands

Variations:

Hip Ball Hip: Partners hold a ball between their hips, and move to X location. Do not touch your partner. Walk forward, backward, in a circle, gallop, skip, etc.

Two Different Body Parts Touching Ball

Groups of 3 with 2 balls or 5 people with 4 balls

Hamburgers and Hot Dogs

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard Four: Students will develop responsible and respectful personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

Equipment: 1/2 swimming noodle per student and a noodle slice per student (I cut about 2" thick chunk off of the ends of the noodles for the slices)

Directions: Each student is given 1/2 a swim noodle (French fry) and one noodle slice (hamburger). Students place the slice on the back of one hand. On go students use the noodles (fries) to try to knock the hamburger off the other student's hands. If a student had his burger knocked off, he picks it up, blows it off, and places it on the back of his other hand to continue playing. You are never out of the game. Play continues. Have different colored noodles go against other colors or boy/girls. Switch it up.

Mosquito Tag

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard Four: Students will develop responsible and respectful personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

Equipment: 1/2 swimming noodle (3-4)

Directions: Several (3-4) students are given swim noodles and are it. They hold the noodles on their foreheads so that it looks like a mosquito-stinger. The mosquitoes move around the play area trying to tag the other players with their stingers. If a student is stung, she freezes and yells for help. Two more students come to her aid and get her back into the game by holding hands and dancing around her calling out "deep woods, deep woods off".

Partner Macarena (Jo Dixon @AAHPERD)

Standard/Goal One: Students will develop competency in all fundamental movement skills and proficiency in some movement forms

Standard/Goal Two: Students will analyze scientific concepts and principles to understand, evaluate, and enhance movement skill acquisition and performance.

Standard Four: Students will develop responsible and respectful personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

Standard Five: students will understand that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, social interaction, and employment.

Equipment: music!

Directions: Stand shoulder to shoulder and hip to hip with your partner while keeping the inside arm behind your back. Only use your outside arm to make the dance movements with your partner.

Partner	Count	Movement
1	1	Right hand goes out palm down
2	2	Left hand goes out palm down
1	3	Right palm up
2	4	Left palm up
1	5	Right hand to left shoulder
2	6	Left hand to right shoulder
1	7	Right hand to right back of ear
2	8	Left hand to left back of ear
1	1	Right hand to left hip
2	2	Left hand to right hip
1	3	Right hand to right hip
2	4	Left hand to left hip
1	5	Right hand lasso and roll hips
2	6	Roll hips with left hand still on hip
1	7	Right hand lasso and roll hips
1 & 2	8	With small jump, turn $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to the left and clap with right and left hand together
Repeat		

Jump Bands

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/General/Jump-Band-Cards UCM 305611 Article.jsp#.WdUOqtVSyHu](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/General/Jump-Band-Cards_UCM_305611_Article.jsp#.WdUOqtVSyHu)

<https://sites.google.com/a/pthsd.net/mrs-siegels-pe-pages/5-jumping-patterns-chinese-jump-rope-jump-bands-and-tinikling/jump-bands>

make your own rubber band jump bands

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=10&v=dVMgpb0BURU

Chinese Jump Ropes

<http://perocks.com/gpage3.html>

Don't Lose Your Marbles

This game works as a fun, team-building exercise that's great for all ages, from elementary-age children all the way through high school students.

- PVC tubes are lightweight, allowing the game to be played by small children and adults alike
- Marbles game promotes teamwork in your learning environment
- Students will race to line up the tubes in this fast-paced game
- Teamwork and communication are necessary for students to transport marbles in a continuous flow of motion through a series of tubes
- Quick thinking and quick action are required to properly line up the tubes

Running Man Games

Kids can learn the importance of teamwork and cooperation while enjoying some friendly competition with this Running Man Game. Players grab hold of the handle and roll up the cord as quickly as possible, causing the running man figure to race toward the finish line on the other side. Young athletes will get an efficient wrist and forearm workout as they work with a partner to attempt to defeat up to five other competitors. This game comes with instructions and an activity guide, so there are plenty of options for team-building fun.

- Perfect for demonstrating the value of teamwork while exercising wrists and forearms
- Players use the handle to quickly roll up the cord and move the running man figure toward the finish line
- Includes instructions and an activity guide for a variety of fun gameplay options
- Up to six teams of two can compete thanks to the six included running man figures and pairs of handles in blue, green, orange, purple, red and yellow

Spooner Boards

<https://www.spoonerboards.com/>

<http://www.thesensoryspectrum.com/spooner-boards-freestyle-vestibular/>

Balance Activities

ABC Push Ups

Students get into a plank (push up position) as the instructor calls out a letter the students repeat that letter and touch hand to opposite shoulder while remaining in plank. Other options can be numbers, words, math, sentences, etc..... Utilize different movements: hand taps, toe taps, reach across, etc....

Rock, Paper, Scissors – Answer A,B,C, or D

- ◆ Jump 1, 2, 3, On 4 (or repeat the question)
- ◆ Answer A: Land with Feet Apart
- ◆ Answer B: Land with One Knee Up
- ◆ Answer C: Land in a Squat
- ◆ Answer D: Land Facing Backwards

Sample Questions

- ◆ $14/2 = \text{?????}$
 - ◆ A. 2
 - ◆ B. 7
 - ◆ C. 6
 - ◆ D. 5
- ◆ The capital of South Dakota is?
 - ◆ A. Bismark
 - ◆ B. Chattanooga
 - ◆ C. Pierre
 - ◆ D. Lincoln
- ◆ The combination of blue and green make?

- ◆ A. green
- ◆ B. Purple
- ◆ C. Orange
- ◆ D. Yellow

Create Hand Shake Brain Breaks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hptU9I8PTdc&index=2&list=PL-ITymkQdGlijgru3b5IO5vuaOmajRjM0r>

Rock Papers Scissors Math

Regular Rock, Paper, Scissors

Instead of rock paper scissors use your hand to display one to five fingers.

Whoever can call out the “multiplication” total wins

More Brain Breaks

- ◆ <http://adventuretofitness.com/>
- ◆ <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/BrainBreaks/default.htm>
- ◆ <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Energizers/Middle.html>
- ◆ <http://www.minds-in-bloom.com/2012/04/20-three-minute-brain-breaks.html>

Exercise Quotations

 PRODUCT of PRACTICE A product is the answer of a multiplication problem. Solve each multiplication problem below. The product tells you how many times to perform the ball skill. You Will Need — one ball	 FITNESS QUOTIENTS A quotient is the answer of a division problem. Solve each division problem below. The quotient tells you how many times or how long to perform the fitness task. You Do Not Need Equipment																		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> Dribble left hand..... 8 × 5 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Ball handle—waist wraps..... 7 × 4 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Dribble—figure 8's..... 4 × 4 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Ball handle—knee wraps..... 8 × 2 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Dribble—cross over 6 × 6 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Ball handle—fast hands..... 9 × 3 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Jump shots to a partner 7 × 6 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Bounce pass with a partner 11 × 3 times</td></tr> <tr><td> YOUR CHOICE 5 × 4 times</td></tr> </table>	 Dribble left hand..... 8 × 5 times	 Ball handle—waist wraps..... 7 × 4 times	 Dribble—figure 8's..... 4 × 4 times	 Ball handle—knee wraps..... 8 × 2 times	 Dribble—cross over 6 × 6 times	 Ball handle—fast hands..... 9 × 3 times	 Jump shots to a partner 7 × 6 times	 Bounce pass with a partner 11 × 3 times	 YOUR CHOICE 5 × 4 times	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td> Straddle Stretch 36 ÷ 3 seconds</td></tr> <tr><td> Push-ups 81 ÷ 9 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Jumping Jacks 80 ÷ 4 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Sit-ups..... 63 ÷ 7 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Butterfly Stretch 22 ÷ 2 seconds</td></tr> <tr><td> Bear Walk..... 91 ÷ 9 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Jog in Place 48 ÷ 2 times</td></tr> <tr><td> Crunches 60 ÷ 6 times</td></tr> <tr><td> YOUR CHOICE 81 ÷ 2 times</td></tr> </table>	 Straddle Stretch 36 ÷ 3 seconds	 Push-ups 81 ÷ 9 times	 Jumping Jacks 80 ÷ 4 times	 Sit-ups..... 63 ÷ 7 times	 Butterfly Stretch 22 ÷ 2 seconds	 Bear Walk..... 91 ÷ 9 times	 Jog in Place 48 ÷ 2 times	 Crunches 60 ÷ 6 times	 YOUR CHOICE 81 ÷ 2 times
 Dribble left hand..... 8 × 5 times																			
 Ball handle—waist wraps..... 7 × 4 times																			
 Dribble—figure 8's..... 4 × 4 times																			
 Ball handle—knee wraps..... 8 × 2 times																			
 Dribble—cross over 6 × 6 times																			
 Ball handle—fast hands..... 9 × 3 times																			
 Jump shots to a partner 7 × 6 times																			
 Bounce pass with a partner 11 × 3 times																			
 YOUR CHOICE 5 × 4 times																			
 Straddle Stretch 36 ÷ 3 seconds																			
 Push-ups 81 ÷ 9 times																			
 Jumping Jacks 80 ÷ 4 times																			
 Sit-ups..... 63 ÷ 7 times																			
 Butterfly Stretch 22 ÷ 2 seconds																			
 Bear Walk..... 91 ÷ 9 times																			
 Jog in Place 48 ÷ 2 times																			
 Crunches 60 ÷ 6 times																			
 YOUR CHOICE 81 ÷ 2 times																			
Waaa-hooo! You are a Product Perfectionist! Check your pedometer (if you are wearing one). how many steps? Give this list back to your teacher and get a new Exercise Equation Task Sheet.	Congratulations! You are a Quotient Conqueror! Check your pedometer (if you are wearing one). how many steps? Give this list back to your teacher and get a new Exercise Equation Task Sheet.																		

Quick Foreign Language Association

- ◆ Stand Up and take one minute and follow your instructors lead
- ◆ Punch=====HaSta
- ◆ Kick=====Pup
- ◆ Spin=====Ding
 - ◆ Exercise ===== Ubung
 - ◆ Jump =====Springen
 - ◆ Sway=====Schwanken

Two Plus One Rocks

- ◆ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=To-EoZ7uq74>

Lets Get Fit Count to 100

- ◆ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hptU9I8PTdc&index=2&list=PL-ITymkQdGIjgru3b5IO5vuaOmajRjM0r>

Cosmic Kids Yoga

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga/videos>

Balance activities...

- ...can improve academic achievement
- ...can enhance reading & visual processing
- ...can improve writing skills
- ...can enhance athletic performance
- ...can decrease learning disabilities

Gross Motor Skills

Bean Bag Bowling	
State Standard: 1, 2, 3, 5	
Equipment: Bean bag per student, spots on the floor (I use my spots that are marking where bowling pins are placed)	Grade: K-1
Purpose of Event: Working on mechanics of throwing and aiming, at a stationary target	
Time: 5-10 minutes	
Description: Each student has a bean bag. Start the students about 4' away from spot. On go, students begin to throw bean bag underhand (or overhand) trying to get the bag to land on the spot. Repeat	
Variations: Have spots worth a set amount of point, closest worth 1, next row worth 2 and so on. Continue to move students back as they progress; add math by counting points; add spelling by placing letters on spots and have them spell words!	
Concerns: Only retrieve bean bag after everyone that is aiming a your spot has thrown.	
This idea is from: Shawn Spurrell, my student teacher from SDSU	

Ribbons: Alphabet	
State Standard: 1, 3,	
Equipment: Ribbon on a Stick for each student, music	Grade: K-2
Purpose of Event: Creative Movement, Flow, Effort, Personal and General Space	
Time: 5-10 minutes	
Description: Each child is in their personal space with a ribbon stick, start by "drawing" the letters of the alphabet, they may pick upper or lower case. I usually don't tell them which, unless they ask, in which case, I let them pick the first time. Then do upper and lower. Add body movement to each letter. Variations: Spell words, their name, or letters in any order, connect the words when you "draw" the alphabet; Put effort movement into the "drawing" of each letter, do does the letter feel or sound to you? Show me. Move around in general space to make letters, shapes, numbers etc.	
Concerns: Students stay in personal space, or move carefully in general space	
This idea is from: Mine :-)	

Hoop Warm Up	
State Standard: 1, 2, 3	
Equipment: Enough hoops for at least, one per student & Music	Grade: K-3 5 th Grade Science lesson: Body Awareness! Use the correct names of the body parts, phalanges, patella, mandible, etc.
Purpose of Event: Check for listening skills, following directions, knowledge of left/right, locomotor skills; opposites (right hand/left foot etc.) personal and general space	
Time: 5-15 minutes	
Description: Scatter hoops around playing area, one student in each hoop. When the music starts, the students move around the area performing the following tasks: (also call out locomotor and non-locomotor skills, so they know how to move from hoop to hoop). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. move around the area without touching any hoops 2. step inside as many hoops as possible with one foot 3. step inside as many hoops as possible with both feet at the same time (jump) 4. touch inside as many hoops as possible with one hand 5. Touch inside as many hoops as possible with two hands 6. touch inside as many hoops as possible with one hand and one foot at the same time 7. touch inside as many hoops as possible with both feet and both hands at the same time 	

8. jump inside a hoop and lift it up and of your body, then place it back on the floor and go to another one
9. pick up a hoop, put it over your body, then drop it and run out of it to another one
10. do a coffee grinder (put one hand in center of hoop, run around hoop one time) and go to another
11. jump (two feet) in, out, in, out, then move to another hoop
12. do everything above with a partner
13. come up with your own way to moving around, in, or through the hoop
14. do everything above while dribbling a ball
15. right hand and left foot in a hoop
16. left hand and right foot in a hoop

Concerns: Be careful, hoops can slide on the floor! Don't step on them!

This idea is from: Curt Hinson He has a great book called Fitness for Children; call 888-217-9131 to order

Brain Breaks

Snap & Wink (Modified from David Sladkey) (4-12)

- Snap your right hand while you wink your left eye
- Then snap your left hand while you wink your right eye
- Alternate and repeat for 60 seconds
- Try to go as fast as you can

Toe Tap (3-12)

- Stand facing partner
- Tap Right foot to Right foot one time
- Tap Left foot to Left foot two times
- Tap Right foot to Right foot three times
- Tap Left foot to Left foot one time
- Continue on with sequence

X and O (3-12)

- Teacher stands facing class; demo and give directions prior to start of activity
- This activity will get the students standing up and sitting down
- When teacher uses left arm students move their arms into an “X” shape
- When teacher uses right arm student move their arms/hands into and “O” shape
- When teacher moves arm in upward direction, students do the X or O standing up
- When teacher moves arm in downward direction (by sides), student do the X or O while seated

Finger Trap (modified from David Sladkey) (5-12)

- Group of 3-10 people stand in a circle
- Hold Left hand out with palm facing up (flat)
- Hold Right hand Index finger pointing down and into the palm of the person beside you (their left palm)
- Teacher says “TRAP” and students try to grab other students index finger while avoid getting their own finger trapped.
- Variation: Repeat with arms crossed

Find it Flash Cards (K-5)

- Set of flash cards (colors, shapes, letters, numbers)
- Choose a number (ie. 3) (could also roll a dice to get number, or draw a number card)
- Draw a card (ie. Yellow)
- As quickly and safely as possible, students need to find 3 yellow items in the classroom
- Items can be written down, or 'tagged' have students touch them
- Can be done with partners

ABC 123 (Modified from David Sladkey) (4-12)

- Outline a letter in the air say a number
- Outline A in the Air, say one
- Outline B in the Air, say two
- Continue

Seat Exchange (K-12)

- Teacher yells, "seat exchange"
- Students move to a new spot
- Can make 'qualifications' has to be "X" distance away, or boy/girl, or different row

Number Up, Letter Down (4-12)

- Activity can be done teacher lead, or with a partner
- With younger students, it would be good to have an alphabet chart visible, and let students know they can use it
- Teacher says a number and the students have to say the number that comes next (ie. Teacher says 3, students reply 4)
- Variation: Teacher says a number and the students have to say the number that is prior (ie. Teacher says 3, students reply 2)
- Teacher says a letter and student says letter just after (ie. Teacher says B, students reply C)
- Variations: Teacher says a letter and student say letter prior (ie. Teacher says T, students say S)

Walking worksheets (4-12)

- Tape worksheets around classroom (walls, chalkboard, easel, file cabinet)
- Students must move from worksheet to worksheet to answer questions
- Great for review

Opposite Hunt (4-12)

- Divide class in half
- One half writes the vocabulary word
- Other half writes definition
- Shuffle cards and hand one to each student
- Students must then walk around room to find match

Air Hockey Pennies (K-12)

- 3 pennies per pair of students
- Start with pennies in a triangle shape touching each other on a flat table
- Students sit across from each other
- One starts with pennies
- Other student uses thumbs and index fingers (palms down on table) to make a goal box
- Student two, with pennies 'slams' index finger onto pennies to break them apart
- Student two then chooses one penny to "push" through the other two pennies, the penny that was just slide will serve as a new 'post" and the student will use one of the other two to "push" through the other two pennies
- Continue until they have pushed the penny (puck) into the First students goal box, or no moves are left
- Switch

Jack-in-the-Box (K-12)

- Modification of Simon Says, great for listening
- When the teacher says Jack in the Box, students sit
- When teacher says Jack out of the Box, student Stand
- Teacher should say the phrase quickly and try to trick the students to get 'caught'
- No consequences for mistakes, I challenge students to not make a mistake, if they do, it is ok. Next time we play, try to make one less.
- Variation: Great for dismissing for drinks, once eliminated, get a drink, and return to your work.

Clean Up the Backyard (4-12)

- Divide class room in half, can be done using tape on the floor, a row of desks, two fixed points at either end of room, etc.
- Half students on one side of the room, half on the other
- Have students take out worksheet that is due ;-) or a blank piece of paper, and crumple it up into a ball
- Start a timer, and say go!
- Student are to throw all of the 'litter' to the other teams side
- When the time is up, yell stop; NO more throwing
- Whichever side has less paper at the end of the time, gets a bonus point on their assignment, or maybe to line up first for recess; or just a congratulations!

Pattern Mania (Retrieved from: Energizing Brain Breaks by David Sladkey) (3-12)

- Have students stand facing a partner (s).
- Call out partner movements and have students do them while you speak (you might have to demonstrate what you mean).
- For example:
 - Right hand shake (they both shake each other's right hand)
 - Left hand shake (they both shake each other's left hand)
 - Two quad slaps (they both tap their own quads (thighs) twice)
 - Double hand five (they both high five each other using both hands)
- Once you give them the pattern, they have to remember it and repeat it with each other again, trying to go a little faster.
- *Modify by having students change partners and try the pattern again.

Ear & Nose Switch (Retrieved from: Energizing Brain Breaks by David Sladkey)(3-12)

- Stand up.
- Take your right hand and grab your left ear. Keep your right arm close to your body.
- Now take your left hand and touch your nose.
- Uncross your arms and move your left hand to your right ear and your right hand to your nose. Your left arm should now be closest to your body.
- Switch back and forth as fast as you can.

Forward & Backward circles (Retrieved from: Energizing Brain Breaks by David Sladkey) (k-12)

- Point your arms toward the ceiling.
- Keep your elbow straight and move your right arm forward creating a large circle. Continue making forward circles with this arm. Now do the same with your other arm except go BACKWARD. Continue with both arms moving at the same time. Make sure you have this pattern working before you continue.

- While both arms continue to move, lift your right foot off the ground and make a ninety degree angle with your knee. Hold this for a few seconds. Now extend your right knee out to make your leg parallel to the ground. Hold for a few seconds.
- Stop.
- Repeat the same process again with your left leg.

Airplane (Retrieved from: Energizing Brain Breaks by David Sladkey) (K-12)

- Point your arms toward the ceiling.
- Lift your right leg and put it behind you. Try to keep your knee straight.
- Lean forward with your body. Try to make your body, arms and leg parallel with the ground. Hold for 10 seconds.
- Now try the same sequence with your left leg behind you.

Don't Fall (Retrieved from: Energizing Brain Breaks by David Sladkey) (K-12)

- Point your arms toward the ceiling.
- Lift your right leg and put it to the side of you. Try to keep it straight.
- Point your body in the opposite direction. Try to make your body, arms and leg parallel with the ground. Hold for 15 seconds.
- Now try the same sequence with your left leg to the side.

Pencil Flip

Equipment:

Container, Pencils- 12 per student.

Environment:

Desks or Table area

Students should face in a direction that if they miss the pencils on the catch they do not fly toward other students.

Directions:

Student begins with one pencil on the backside of their hand. Using an upward motion the student flips the pencil in the air and moves their hand around and above to catch the pencil in a downward motion. Upon catching the first pencil the student will then complete the activity again adding a second pencil. The student continues adding pencils unless they drop one. If they drop a pencil they must re-start at one pencil. The objective is to complete the task doing all pencils.

Extension:

Attempt to do the activity with NON-DOMINANT HAND

MOVING Up Cup

Equipment:

Sets of Yogurt Cups for each child: 25 cups each, 24 regular and 1 Colored

Environment:

Desks or tables. Students will participate standing away from furniture.

Students will use furniture only when they need to put items down

Directions:

Students will partner up or play as a group of three.

On a go signal Students will remove the top cup from the stack and move it to the bottom. This is repeated with alternating hands (Left, Right, Left). This causes the **Colored** Cup to ascend toward the top. The students are in a challenge to be the first student to get their colored cup to the top. Students are to alternate hands. Once they complete the activity in their group they can switch and play another member of their group.

Extension:

Attempt to perform the activity holding the stack with one hand and only use the other to move the cups to the bottom

Bouncing Pencil

Equipment:

Container, Pencils- 10 pencils per student.

Environment:

Desks

Students should face in a direction that pencils do not fly toward other students. USE pencils that have not been sharpened

Directions:

Student begins with one pencil and attempts to bounce the pencil eraser end first off of their desk so that it rebounds into the air and lands in the small container. Student may only bounce them one at a time (Because you will have student s try all 10 at one time). Once they land one in the container it will remain until they get each pencil in the bucket. As they continue to gain pencils in their containers the activity will become more aerobic as they have to retrieve missed pencils more often.



Pedometer Shake

Equipment:

Wristbands (4 Per Student), Pedometers- 4 per student if possible Stop watch or timer

Environment:

Desks or Table- To place materials on
Open Space away from table.

Directions:

Students begin by placing wristbands around wrists and around the ball of the foot (Would be difficult to get wristbands up to ankles). Reset Pedometers.

On the go signal (Timer Starts) students will shake feet and wrists in a manner that will register counts on their pedometers for the period of time. I suggest 2 minutes to achieve exhaustion!

Have the student add their total pedometer steps to achieve the “winner”

Modification: If you have limited pedometers use one on a foot and the other on the opposite wrist.



NUT & BOLT RACES

Equipment:

Bolts with matching size Nuts and Washers.
Each student will need own materials. RACE LIST

Directions:

Students will play against a partner or in groups. Each player starts with same materials based upon the RACE LIST. Starting at the same time, players will attempt to be the first student to complete the activity based upon the race list. Example: Race to get a nut, washer, nut to the top of the bolt. On a go signal students race to try to complete the activity before the others in the group.

Extension:

The activity changes each race to create a more challenging race.



Hex Nut Tower

Equipment:

Chop Stick for each student. 10 Nuts per Child.

Environment:

Desks or Table.

Directions:

Students will play against a partner or in groups. Each player starts with same materials at the same time. Players will attempt to be the first student to complete the activity based upon stacking the nuts one on top of the other . If they fall over, you must place the ones that fell back on the stick and continue to try again from where they fell off. Be the first to stack them with the chop stick only.

Extension:

Team up with a partner and try to alternate stacking with 5 nuts on each chop stick.



SPINNING COIN CATCH

Equipment:

Poker Chip for a Pair of students, or individual if partners are not used

Environment:

Desks or Table.

Directions:

Students will play against a partner or in groups. One player will start with the poker chip and flick the chip so that it spins in circles on its edge. The other student will attempt to stop the chip from spinning using a finger to stop so that it is trapped in the standing position to earn a point. If it falls over no point is earned. Student B then flicks the chip so Player A can attempt to stop it as well.

Extension:

Play as an individual and see how many you can stop in a row.

JUGGLING SCARVES

Equipment:

Juggling scarves or plastic grocery bags (cheaper alternative)

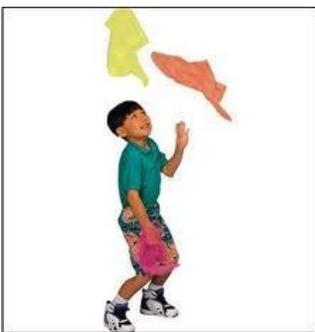
Environment:

Open floor space (no tables or desks needed), May need cones or spots to designate a safe area of play.

Directions:

Students of all ages can enjoy the challenges of throwing and catching scarves. If space is available, have students move slightly away from their table to have more space for creating unique throwing and catching tricks.

If available offer a list or pictures of different ways to toss and catch the scarf.



String Challenge

Equipment: Multiple lengths of yarn, bailing twine, small diameter rope, etc.... Lengths can vary depending on number of students

Environment: Any small space – enough space to make letters, numbers, words from the string

Directions: Students will be placed in groups of anywhere from 2 – 10 depending on the length of string and the space available. The group will all place two hands on the string and two hands must stay on the string. The teacher will call out a shape, letter, or word. The students will make the letter, shape, word that the teacher called out while maintaining both hands on the string at all times. This can be done as a race between groups or a timed activity to see which groups can find success in the required time.

Land, Sea and Air



What you need:

- Kids full of energy, bouncing off the walls
- Tape (*optional*), or a bit of floor in which two distinct areas are laid out

How to play “Land, Sea and Air”:

Determine which part of the floor is “land” and which is “sea”. If you are using tape, lay down a long piece. The area in front of the tape is “sea” and the area behind it is “land”. Since our carpet is patchwork, the boys chose a gray square to be “land” and a blue square to be “sea.”

The leader (*that was me*) calls out one of three directions: Land, Sea or Air. When she says, “Land!” kids jump into the land area. When she says, “Sea!” kids jump into the sea. When she says, “Air!” kids jump as high into the air as they can.

Play continues until everyone collapses on the ground laughing.

I surprised the kids a couple of times with random commands like, “Tornado!” “Earthquake!”, to which they invented their own movements.

Sanity Saver



What surprised me was that as soon as my older son saw what was going on in the living room with his brother, he wanted to join in, too. The next 30 minutes ended up being exponentially less chaotic than the previous 30 minutes, thus substantially saving my sanity. (Note: this post contains affiliate links.)

Disclaimer: parental supervision when an activity involves magnets is essential. Magnets are potentially dangerous and extremely hazardous if swallowed.

What you need:

A [magnet wand](#). Kids LOVE magnet wands. I'm not kidding, here. We get sooooo much mileage out of our magnet wand. We have this sturdy [Flexible Magnetic Pick-Up Tool](#) and it has been fantastic.

Various magnetic (*or metal objects*) from around the house. We used [these magnetic wooden alphabet letters](#), as well as our beloved [Magnetic Wooden Blocks](#).



I'm listing some of the levels of our game below to help you get the idea, but you can and should do whatever works best for you in the moment. Consider our levels and magnet game objectives as inspiration.

How we played:

Note: all of these objectives had to be accomplished without touching the floor. So, the boys stood or walked on the pillows.

Level 1: Pick up all the magnets with your wand and put them in the bucket.

Level 2. Pick up magnets with each foot on a different pillow.

Level 3. Pick up all the magnets, two at a time.

Level 4. Pick up all the magnets, 3 at a time.



Level 5. I put all the number magnets in a center bucket. For each turn, the player picked a number with his [magnet wand](#), then he had to pick up all the magnets that number at a time. For example, if he choose an 8, he had to gather 8 letters and/or blocks at a time.

Level 6. You must pick up all the magnets, standing on each pillow at least once.

Level 7. You must pick up only square blocks and build a structure without touching the blocks with your hands. *(We did several variations of this idea. Such as: pick up all the square blocks, pick up only long skinny blocks, etc.)*

To be honest, I know we did more than just these levels, but I can't remember the exact rules of each level. We just made it up as we went along and that was the fun of it.



We only have one magnet wand and so my 10 year old fashioned his own. However, he was clearly jealous of his brother's superior equipment! Are your kids up for the challenge of an indoor magnet game? Get our your [magnet wand](#) and give it a go.

One sanity saving idea is not enough. Visit my [gigantic list of indoor activities for kids](#) and sign up to get more boredom busters delivered straight to your inbox.

Paper Airplane Landing Strips



It's kind of amazing how the normally squabbling brothers have been cooperating, organizing flying experiments and scientific comparisons, and most impressive to me, they have been getting creative with landing strips. (Note: this post contains affiliate links.)

I last wrote about paper airplanes when I describes what a [perfect play date activity](#) it was for my older son and our downstairs neighbor. This past snow day the two of them made a few more from the fantastic [Klutz Book of Paper Airplanes](#), which has superior instructions and trouble-shooting advice, BUT what has really gotten my two sons to have brotherly bonding time has been our [Paper Airplane Fold-a-Day 2015 Day-to-Day Calendar](#)!!

Every morning we fold the airplane of the day (*we are going to have quite the collection by the end of the year*) and give it a test drive before leaving for school. Then, almost every evening a big chunk of time is spent flying the new plane against the previous ones.

If your kids are paper airplane nerds like mine, encourage them to make a landing strip.

Here is their butcher paper landing strip. If you don't have a [big roll of paper](#), you need to get one! It comes in handy for so many activities! My older son wanted to put point values in the circles, but I have banned all competitive games for the time being because "friendly brotherly competition" always ends in screaming.



Blocks. (*Kiddo used our [Twig blocks](#)*) Gather up your blocks or LEGO bricks and design a fancy landing strip for your paper airplane games. I believe the stack of blocks is meant to be an airport control tower!



Use tape directly on the floor. I've never had trouble removing painter's tape, but I don't recommend using regular masking tape.



No doubt your own kids can come up with their own unique version! Do your kids love paper airplanes?

Things you can do with a rectangle of tape on the floor:

Jump over it.

Jump in it.

Jump around it. (Hi, downstairs neighbors!)

See how many times you can bounce a ball in it.

Race cars around it.

Race cars through it.

Use it as a start or finish line



Ball bouncing was definitely the favorite challenge. Use [ping pong balls](#) because they are light weight, have great bounce potential and are unlikely to break anything when the inevitable happens.



What do you think your kids would do with a rectangle of tape on the floor?

P.S. I highly recommend using [low-tack painter's tape](#) (test before use, but I've never has a problem.)

For more EASY ideas, check out our [giant list of indoor activities for kids](#), or these tried and true ideas which siblings can do together

BALLOON TENNIS GROSS MOTOR PLAY ACTIVITY

April 8, 2015 by [littlebins](#) [9 Comments](#)

Are you stuck inside? Too rainy, too hot, too snowy? Kids still need to get the wiggles out and a stuck indoors day can mean a ton of unused energy. If your kids seem like they are climbing the walls, then try this easy and cheap **balloon tennis game**. I always make sure I have balloons on hand for [indoor gross motor play](#).

EASY INDOOR BALLOON TENNIS GAME!



This balloon tennis game couldn't be any simpler, but it is loads of fun. Just take a look at my son in the photos below. Make sure to pick a up a few extra fly swatters. Everyone, adults included, will want to get in on the fun.

Our tennis balloon game is an awesome energy buster on an indoor day. We have more simple [indoor gross motor games too](#) plus a [DIY air hockey indoor game](#).



BALLOON TENNIS GAME SUPPLIES

Balloons

Fly Swatters

Find your supplies at the dollar store or grocery store. Pick up a few fly swatters and a bag of balloons for your next balloon game. That's all you need to keep everyone busy on a rainy or cold day.

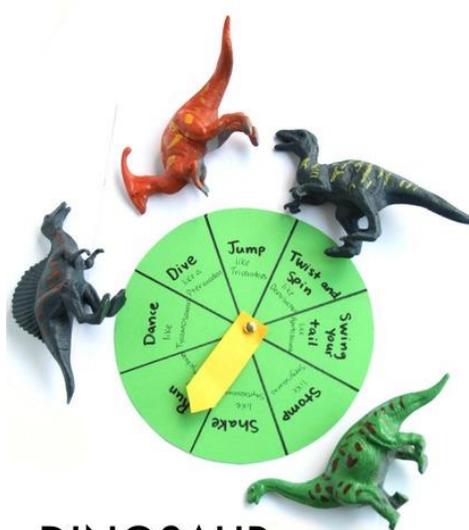
If you are stuck inside, balloon play is the way to go. This game will get everyone moving and chasing balloons around the house. It's super important for kids to get energy out. If you have a roll of painters tape, try this fun [line jumping game too](#).

THIS BALLOON TENNIS GAME REALLY KEPT THIS GUY BUSY AND BURNED A LOT OF ENERGY TOO!

This balloon tennis game is a keeper for us. My son has high energy and being stuck inside all day is no fun unless he can get some energy out. I love simple, inexpensive games that are easy to set up.

Dinosaur Gross Motor Movement Game Kids

This month on the **Book Club Play Date series**, we read and played the book Dinosaurumpus by Tony Mitton. Our dinosaur movement game inspired tons of giggles and wiggles as we moved our way through this book with a **gross motor activity!**



DINOSAUR MOVEMENT GAME

SUGARAINTS.COM

14K+

Dinosaur Gross Motor Movement Game for Kids

We've included affiliate links in this post for the book and items you'll need to create the DIY Dinosaur game.

Have you read the book, [Dinosaurumpus!](#)? This is a book that is sure to get the kids moving with it's loud and active rhymes as the dinosaurs dance an irresistible romp. My kids couldn't help but move and groove as I read them the story. We had to make a movement gross motor game to go along with the book!



Make this game easily using our free printable for the game board. We listed out the dinosaurs in the book and the actions they did. These went onto a game spinner that I made on [card stock](#). We used dinosaur figures for part of our movement game. [These ones](#) are a great deal!



To play the dinosaur movement game:

First print out the [free printable](#). You'll also want the [game rules](#) for easy play and the spinner piece. Make your game board and ensure the arrow spins using a [brass fastener](#). Print your printable on [card stock](#) OR you can use regular printer paper for the game board, but the arrow won't spin as well. You may want to print the game spinner on paper and then glue to cardboard for more sturdiness during (active) play.

One player hides the [dinosaur figures](#) around the room or outdoor play area.

The first player spins the arrow and reads the action. He or she then races off to find one of the hidden dinosaurs. When she finds a dinosaur, she races back and performs the action. There will be shakes, stomps, jumps, and TONS of giggles with this gross motor activity!

We loved this game activity for it's gross motor action. It would be a great activity for rainy day fun or indoor play when the kids need to get the wiggles out. Racing off and remembering the action they must perform requires a child to recall auditory and visual information necessary for so many functional skills.

GET THE [free printable](#) and the [game rules/spinner](#) by clicking the links.



We hid the dinosaurs in all sorts of fun spaces in the house.



The dinosaurs in the book, [Dinosaurumpus!](#) move a lot! Get ready for stomping, shaking, diving, dancing, running, jumping, twisting, and spinning!

Want to get your kids to [practice math](#), handwriting, sounding out words, sleuthing and have fun all at the same time? This secret code activity is for you. I've been wanting to do secret codes with the kids for a while, and since it fit the bill of this week's STEAM POWER theme of "compute," the timing was right.



I set up our secret code activity around superheroes, but you can certainly switch things up to suit your child's interest. Or, better yet, you can simply introduce the idea of secret codes and let them do all the creative work. (*My personal favorite.*)

The first order of business was to create a simple decoder for the kids to use. As I said, it's good to let your kids make their own, but since I was setting this up for a much needed [after school distraction](#), I prepped the activity ahead of time. (*Never fear, my fellow lazy parents, it took much less time than I thought.*) I knew I wanted to include a [math component](#) for my computing-loving kids, and I had high hopes that a crack the code activity would be a [fun handwriting activity](#) for my youngest. (Note: this post contains affiliate links.)

HOW TO MAKE THE SECRET CODE GENERATOR

This secret code formula is a basic one you will no doubt recognize from your own childhood. I got the idea to use a slider from the [Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers and Secret Writing](#), a book my son has been enjoying. It has all sorts of goodies in it for your spy-in-training.

You can probably figure it how to make it by looking at the photo, you are so clever. The key is to make the strip longer than the colored paper and to cut slits that are slightly larger than the strip, so it glides smoothly.



Write the alphabet on the colored paper. I put an alphabet on one side of the strip and a number line on the other, with extra letters and numbers on each end, as shown.

HOW TO USE THE SECRET CODE GENERATOR

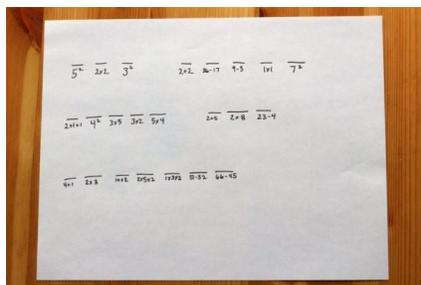
I probably don't have to explain how to create the codes to you clever, clever people. There are several ways to keep things interesting.

Simple code:

Line up the alphabet to the numbers so that A=1, Z=26, etc. This will help kids practice one to one correspondence. In other words, CAT would be written 3-1-20.

Ever so slightly more challenging code:

Lining up the alphabet to alphabet or alphabet to number line, the slider can be moved back and forth. A new code might be "number line +1" so that A=2 and so forth. So, CAT would be 4-2-21. "Alphabet +1" would be A=B, so CAT is written DBU. You can see how your kids can use this formula to come up with different codes.



Decoding activity for mathematicians:

For my youngest son I kept the codes at the "ever so slightly more challenging" level, but for my older kids, a fun way to have them practice their "power facts" (*as they are called at our school*)



So there you have it. A super successful activity that combines math, handwriting, a bit of fun and perhaps a superhero or two. My next challenge is to get the boys to create coded scavenger hunts for each other. We shall see.....

A rainy afternoon meant we needed a [fun indoor project](#) so I set up this spelling game and [literacy activity](#) for Kiddo at the table.



LITERACY AND SPELLING GAME

My son loves to spell (at Thanksgiving dinner I cracked up when he clarified a misunderstanding, “No Grandma, *food*, F-O-O-D!”). He even takes over the [living room with his spelling](#)! I created this seek and find word game I like to call “Sift ‘n’ Spell.” It can easily be altered according to your child’s skill level (*see tips at the end*).

What you need:

- Small bucket. A shallow, rectangular plastic food container is perfect.
- Letters. We have these small plastic letters, but you can make your own by writing letters on small pieces of cardboard, or use letter magnets.
- Slotted Spoon
- Toys or other small objects.
- Rice.

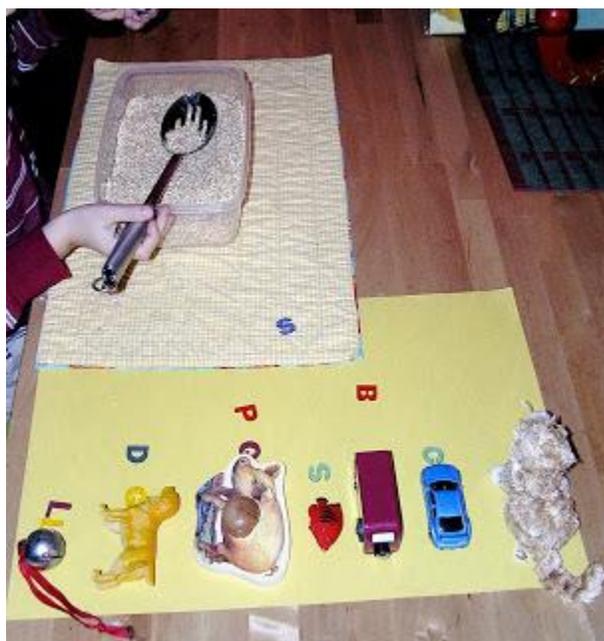
First I set out a the bucket of rice with small letters hidden inside. (*I always use something that I have failed to cook before the expiration date, failed housewife that I am. If you don’t want to*

use food, try clean sandbox sand from the hardware store.) I lined up a few toys with 3-4 letter names, such as “cat”, “bell”, “fish” and so forth. You want to make sure that the hidden letters will indeed spell the names of the objects!

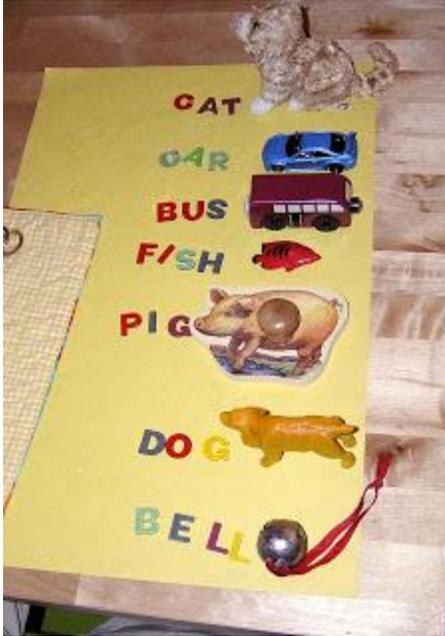
I happened to have some little colored plastic letters I got a long time ago at the craft store, but no need to buy anything, you could write the letters on small pieces of heavy paper or cardboard to hide in the rice.



Using a slotted spoon, he sifted the rice to find the letters.



He spelled all the words without any help from me!



He loved this so much that when he was done he pushed the letters back in the rice and repeated the activity.

You can easily adjust this according to child's skill level:

- For beginning readers write out the words so they can match each letter, placing them on top of the written word.
- For kids just learning the alphabet, match letters to a written alphabet. Or work just on the initial letter and sound of each word.
- If sorting letters into multiple words is too challenging, hide the letters to one words at a time.
- If your child can't figure out where he should add his letter, sound out the words with him.
- Once all the letters have been found and the words spelled, be sure to review the words.

MORE: Literacy activities at home don't have to be complicated. See all my favorite ways for [\(Almost\) Effortless Literacy Ideas for Kids](#).



LARGE + SMALL MOTOR SKILLS ACTIVITY: GIANT DOT-TO-DOT!

A fun fine and gross motor skills activity is a giant dot-to-dot. You may remember New Kid working on his [toddler dot-to-dot](#) a few years back, and now he likes to get down with his marker on the floor. I love the way a giant floor connect-the-dots activity gets him exercising both his small and large motor muscles together.

You don't need to arrange the dots to reveal a picture when connected. I simply drew large dots and numbers in a random pattern on a large piece of butcher paper. For this particular puzzle, I used several colors, so it was easier for him to locate sequential numbers: 1-5 were blue, 6-10 were green and so forth. He enjoyed this activity so much he wanted to do it again, but I didn't even need to make a new one, he simply chose a different colored pen.



See how he needs to stretch, reach and move! New Kid's occupational therapist informed me that working large groups of muscles is important for developing the small motor skills, that I should not limit our therapy exercises to just fine motor skill practice. Plus, I love that the giant dot-to-dot sneaks in a bit of counting practice, too!

Math + fine motor + gross motor = a Giant Dot-to-dot!

****Have your kids "brainstorm" what the design most reminds them of****

Four Square Hulu Hoop

Set Up: Utilize four hulu hoops per game (a different color for each level is good) - set up the four hoops in a four square pattern on the gym floor or outdoor grass field. A small dodgeball or similar size and type of ball works well.

The game: the game is played like a traditional four square game with the exception the players are in a plank position behind each hulu hoop. A very good resource for the basic rules of 4-Square are available at: <http://www.squarefour.org/rules>

Academic Integration: Typically none but math could be integrated with the scoring systems or science/physics could be integrated with understanding game strategies, ball placement, etc....

Hula Hoop Tinikling

This activity is a fun and challenging variation of traditional Tinikling for the learning of rhythms, teamwork, and physical activity.

Set Up: Students are typically placed in groups of 3 or 4 with two hula hoops per group and each group is spread out amongst the activity area. Two students are the tappers with the hulu hoops and one or two students are the jumpers.

The Game: Tinikling is a traditional Philippine form of dancing utilizing bamboo poles. For this version, we utilize two hulu hoops as a replacement for the two bamboo poles. The rhythm created by moving the hulu hoops together and apart. The hoops are overlapping for count 1. The hoops are pulled apart for counts 2 and 3. The hoops are moved back to overlapping for the count of 4. During count 1 the jumper jumps with both feet inside the overlapping hulu hoops, during counts 2 and 3 the jump is jumping with one foot in each hulu hoop, during count 4 the jumper jumps with both feet inside the overlapping hoops.

To make the activity more difficult, change to 4 hulu hoops with four tappers and one or two jumpers.

Academic Integration: Typically none. Jumpers could spell spelling words or work math problems in rhythm with their jumping. The tappers could sing the rhythm with various languages.

Hula Hut Tower

Set Up: Multiple sets of 6 of the same sized hoops. Creating a individual hut requires 6 similar sized hoops. Before the activity begins, you should demonstrate how to build the hula hut to your students. Place one hula hoop flat on the ground – this will be the hut’s foundation. Next, stand two hula hoops up on the inside of the foundation, but on opposite sides. Lean the tops of the hoops at 45 degree angles until they touch. Next, do the same with two more hula hoops (stand them up on the inside of the foundation) but from opposite sides of the first two hoops. Then, lean the tops of these two hoops together at a 45 degree angle over the tops of the first two. Next you will place the last hula hoop (the roof) over the others (the walls) to hold them in place.



